

Completion of the Haysi to Big A Mountain Water Project

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August 19, 2010

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Bee, Virginia

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I am pleased to return to Bee today to mark the completion of a new federally funded water system, which will provide safe and reliable public drinking water for the first time to 238 residents in both Dickenson and Buchanan Counties.

Today, construction has been completed on the final phase of the Haysi to Big A Mountain Water Project, which is a joint undertaking by the Dickenson County Public Service Authority and the Buchanan County Public Service Authority to provide public water service to the 238 homes along the Route 80 corridor from the Birchleaf community in Dickenson County to the Davenport community in Buchanan County.

Adequate and reliable public water systems are essential to maintaining Southwest Virginia's excellent quality of life and critical to achieving residential and business growth in our region. The new Haysi to Big A Mountain water system marks a significant step forward in advancing these goals for residents of Dickenson and Buchanan Counties.

Previously, the residents along Route 80 in both Counties relied on private wells and springs for drinking water which were often unreliable and, in some cases, had become contaminated. To address this problem, the Dickenson and Buchanan County Public Service Authorities worked together to develop a water system that would benefit both Counties and provide water service along Route 80 from the Birchleaf area to Davenport.

Last year, water service commenced on the second phase of the project. That portion of the project provided service to the more than 43 homes along Route 80 from the Sportsman Lake area to the Bee community. And in 2008, we marked the completion of the project's first phase, which brought safe and reliable public drinking water services to the 18 homes along Route 80 from the Birchleaf community in Dickenson County to the Sportsman lake area.

Today, the final portion of the project has been completed, which brings public water service for the first time to 177 homes along Route 80 from the Bee community in Dickenson County where we gather today to the Davenport community in Buchanan County.

The total cost to construct the Haysi to Big A Mountain Water project was more than \$6 million. Of that total amount, \$4.25 million has been provided through federal funding at my request. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, through its Community Development Block Grant program provided \$1 million for the third phase of the project and \$390,000 for the second phase. In addition, the Appalachian Regional Commission provided a grant of \$500,000 for the project's third phase, and more than \$2,350,000 has been provided through the federal Abandoned Mine Land program at my request.

In addition to the federal funds, the Virginia General Assembly provided a total of nearly \$1.4 million for the project. The Coalfield Water Development Fund provided \$185,000. And Dickenson and Buchanan Counties provided a combined total of \$144,030.

As part of the project, nearly 20 miles of water lines have been installed along Route 80 from the Birchleaf community to the Davenport community. In addition, water lines have been installed in the Murphy Road, Indian Creek, Laurel Branch, Little Fox, and Sullivan Branch areas. A new water storage tank and a new pump station have also been installed.

Now that the project has been fully completed, safe and reliable public water service is available

for the first time to the 238 homes along the Route 80 corridor between from Birchleaf in Dickenson County to Davenport community in Buchanan County. In Davenport, this project connects to the existing Buchanan County water system, providing an additional water supply for the Council and Davenport communities.

Access to safe and reliable public water and wastewater services are essential to our economic development goals for Southwest Virginia. Not only do these services improve the quality of life for residents but the availability of these services enables growth in the number of businesses and residents in our region. For these reasons, one of my primary goals in representing Southwest Virginia is to work with our local governments to obtain federal funding to expand the region's public water and wastewater infrastructure. With the success we mark today, we can clearly see that our combined efforts have borne fruit.

There are several individuals who have been instrumental in the development of the new Haysi to Big A Mountain water system.

First, I would like to recognize Senator Phillip Puckett, Delegate Bud Phillips and Delegate Will Morefield for their outstanding leadership in representing this region in the Virginia General Assembly. The assistance that they provided in securing the state funding for this project was instrumental to today's success, and I want to thank them.

Teddy Bailey and Delano Sykes, who represent the project's service area on the Dickenson County Board of Supervisors, and the other members of the Board deserve our thanks today for their leadership and foresight in working in cooperation with Buchanan County on this water project that will benefit residents of both Counties.

And in turn, William P. Harris and Steve O'Quinn, members of the Buchanan County Board of Supervisors who represent the communities that are served by this project deserve our thanks for their leadership. I would also like to thank the other members of the Board.

I would also like to thank Daman Rasnick, Chair of the Dickenson County Public Service Authority, Ron Phillips, Executive Director of the PSA, and the other Members of the Public Service Authority Board for their efforts.

Gary Prater, Chair of the Buchanan County Public Service Authority, Darrell Cantrell, Executive Director of the Buchanan County PSA and the other Members of the Buchanan County PSA Board deserve our recognition as well for their dedicated efforts on behalf of Buchanan County residents.

Jim Baldwin, Executive Director of the Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission, and his excellent staff perform outstanding work for our region, and I would like to thank them for their tireless efforts.

I also want to thank Donna Stanley with the Coalfield Water Development Fund for her outstanding efforts to expand access to public drinking water across the region.

Bill Shelton, Director of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, also deserves our thanks today.

I want to extend special thank the residents of each of these communities who have contacted my office as well as the Public Service Authority in order to demonstrate their support for this project.

Finally, I want to thank my Director for Community Development, Derek Lyall, and my Project Manager, Kim McKay, for their excellent work in support of the expansion of water and wastewater infrastructure across the region.

The completion of the Haysi to Big A Mountain water system is an example of what can be achieved when citizens and government officials at the local, state and federal levels work together in aid of a common purpose. For that cooperation and successful work in establishing public water service for this community, I want to commend everyone here and offer special congratulations to the residents who will be receiving the new water service today.